THE ANZAC MYTH

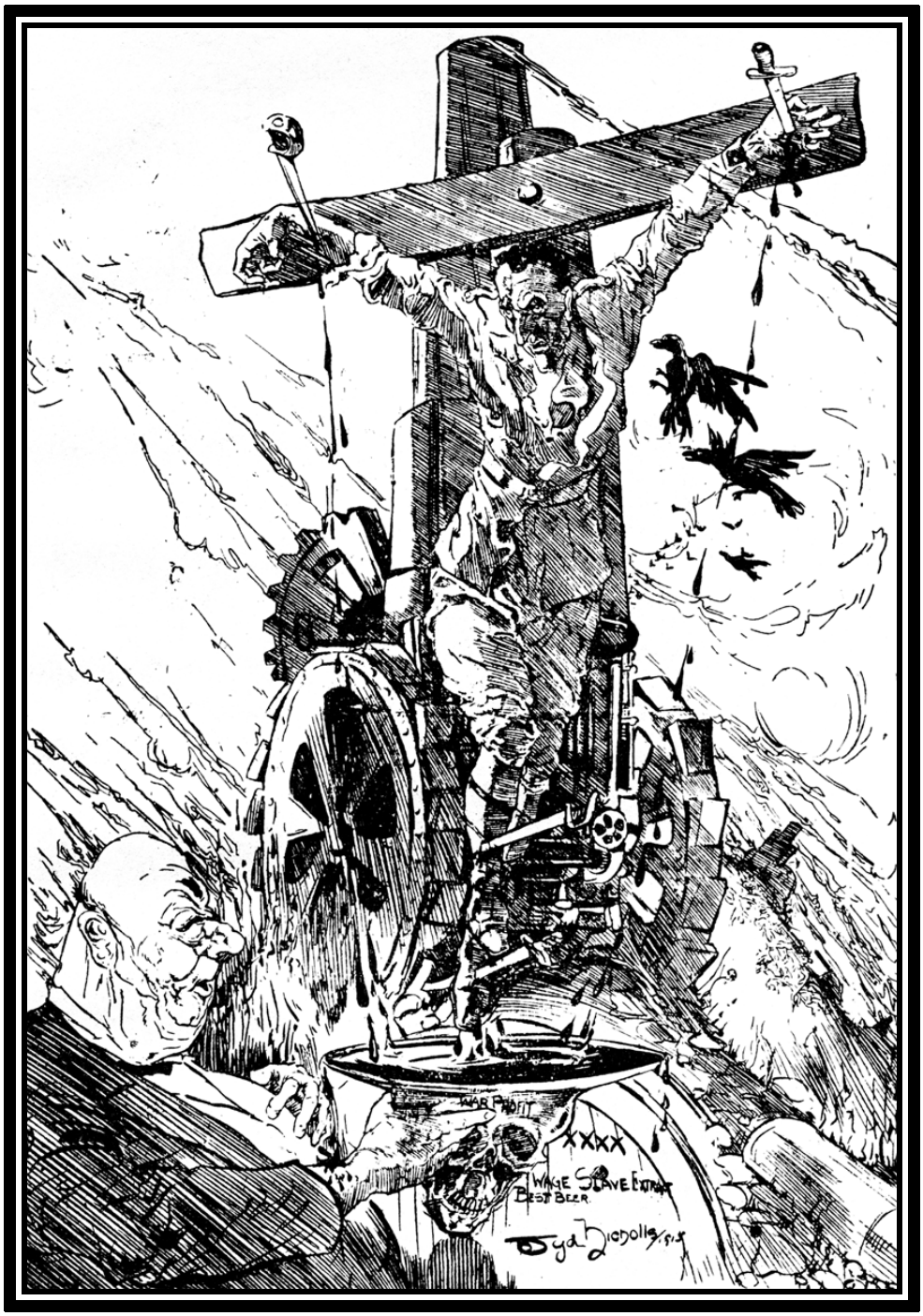


Illustration Front Cover

LONG LIVE THE WAR!
HIP, HIP, 'OORAY!
FILL 'EM UP AGAIN!

The Commonwealth government is floating a further $10,000,000 for the War Chest. The prospectus calls upon investors to "show a patriotic spirit….especially as no sacrifice is entailed….the rate of interest being for higher than in normal times."

Artist Syd Nicholls.

The *Direct Action* cartoon which earned Tom Baker a sentence of twelve months imprisonment.

Anarchist Media Institute
P.O. Box 20
Parkville 3052
Melbourne
AUSTRALIA

(03) 8508 9856
(24 Hour message centre)

http://anarchistmedia/weekly.html

Email: anarchistage@yahoo.com

'*Anarchist World This Week*' -
Broadcast live from the studios of 3CR
in Melbourne Australia across Australia,
on the National Community Radio Satellite,
streaming live on www.3CR.org.au

Now available by podcast at www.3CR.org.au

Dr. Joseph TOSCANO

Copyright © Joseph TOSCANO, 2008
All inquiries regarding copying for other purposes apart from study, research, criticism or review
are to be made to the publishers at the above address.

FOREWORD:

Joseph TOSCANO EAM

This booklet was published to dispel the myths surrounding Anzac Day. Almost a hundred years after the Gallipoli landing almost no account exists of a mass movement that prevented another 60,000 young Australians been sacrificed in the European killing fields during WWI.

This booklet has been published to acknowledge the sacrifices made by those Australians who opposed conscription and Australia's involvement in World War One.

LEST WE FORGET
Melbourne, April 2008

CONTENTS:

Foreword	V
Introduction	VIII
The Industrial Workers of the World	10
Tom Barker	11
Australia Wakes Up	12
The 1916 Referendum	13
‘The Aftermath’	15
I.W.W. Release Campaign	16
The Legacy of the World War One Anti Conscription Struggle	18
Selected Bibliography	19
The Twelve	20
Contents	VII

INTRODUCTION

ANZAC DAY – 25th APRIL – The anniversary of the ANZAC landing at Gallipoli (Turkey) in 1915; Observed in Australia as a day on which past military sacrifice is remembered.

Since I was a little boy, I've been fascinated by the obelisks that you see in every suburb, town and village that were erected after WWI to remember those who never come back from the 'war to end all wars' – World War One. While other children skipped round these memorials, oblivious of their significance, I made an effort to read the names engraved on the monuments, not realising these 'memorials to sacrifice' were also memorials to stupidity, ignorance, betrayal and incompetence. I believed the stories about their brave deaths. I believed the stories about sacrifice, freedom and democracy because they were the only stories I was familiar with.

Tragically in 2008, almost 100 years after WWI, we are still regaled with stories of heroism, courage and sacrifice surrounding a war that was fought by workers at either end of a bayonet for the glory of God, King and Country. Since the 1970's, I've been aware that celebrations that are held every year in Australia on the 25th of April are based on obscene lies that have been repeated so often they are now accepted as gospel truth. No one wants to know that Australians were more divided during WWI than at any time during our 107 year history. The history of WWI is a history of betrayal, conspiracy and mass murder committed on the altar of Mammon.

"The I.W.W. (Industrial Workers of the World) not only preach, but practice sabotage. Nor do they stop even here; but, for reasons that will be obvious to every citizen of the Commonwealth in the course of the next few days I will not now catalogue their crimes, except to remind people of the Commonwealth that they are to a man anti conscriptionists. They are all anarchists and enemies of society". – P.M. Billy Hughes, 1916

Australian Prime Minister Billy Hughes – the father of 60,000 young Australians sacrificed on the European killing fields for the glory of

God, King and Country commenting on the men and women who spearheaded the Australian anti conscription struggle that prevented another 60,000 young Australians from being sacrificed for God, King and Country on the European killing fields.

Joseph TOSCANO – April 2008

THE INDUSTRIAL WORKERS OF THE WORLD - I.W.W. – The Wobblies

The Industrial Workers of the World (I.W.W.) grew out of the bitter battles surrounding the Western Federation of Miners attempts in 1903 to obtain the 8-hour day in Colorado US. Although the miners were beaten, the leader of the miners – Big Bill Haywod – successfully nurtured the birth of the I.W.W. at a conference of industrial unionists and socialists which was held in Chicago on the 27th of June 1905. The theoretical basis of the movement was provided by the secretary of the Socialist Labor Party – Daniel de Leon.
The industrial unionists and the socialists had concluded that political struggle by itself would never bring about radical change. They agreed the workers must organise into one big union – the Industrial Workers of the World. The initial alliance was an unstable one, as the industrial unionists concluded that in order to take and hold the means of production, the place to wage class war was at the point of exploitation –the place of employment – while the De Leonists still favoured political action. Three years after it was founded, the I.W.W. split into the De Leon faction and the Direct Action faction. The Direct Action faction made its headquarters in Chicago and through a series of dramatic strikes, soon came to dominate the class struggle in the US.

The Chicago Wobblies brought the message of revolutionary unionism to the workers by setting up local industrial unions which brought together all the workers (regardless of their trade or skills) who worked in the same industry. The Wobblies aimed to format social revolution through workplace democracy. The De Leon faction of the I.W.W. was established in Sydney in October 1907. From late 1908 to May 1911, the De Leon faction held sway in Australia, despite reservations that were held about the organisation by many Australian militants. In May 1911, a handful of Adelaide socialists contacted the Chicago I.W.W. requesting a charter to form an Australian branch.

The Australian De Leon supporters were *“disgustingly disappointed”* that this tiny group of *“muddle headed, prejudiced and ignorant pseudo-socialists”* should join hands with the *“I-am-a-Bum anarchist hobo crowd”*. Six months later, a small group of Sydney radicals asked the Adelaide local for a charter to form a Sydney group. In May 1912, the Sydney group had only 12 members. Within 3 years, the vigour and courage of the Sydney I.W.W. turned this tiny organisation into what can now be described as the most significant revolutionary movement Australians have known, spearheading a revolutionary anti conscription struggle that made those in authority turn pale and tremble in their seats.

TOM BARKER

Tom Barker at the tender age of 26 was already an accomplished writer, speaker and organiser. He was born in the Lakes District in England in 1887. At 15 he ran away to Liverpool. At 17 he joined the 8th Hussars – and Irish Cavalry Regiment based in Aldershot. He was forced to leave the army after a bout of rheumatic fever and eventually made his way to New Zealand in 1909. He soon became an organiser for the Chicago wing of the I.W.W. when it was established in NZ in 1912. As an organiser, he was heavily involved in the 1912 - 1913 strike wave that brought NZ to a standstill. Arrested for sedition and released on a bond, he absconded to Sydney in February 1914.
He joined the Sydney branch of the I.W.W. writing for the organisation's monthly paper 'Direct Action'. By the end of the year, Tom Barker had become the Secretary of the Sydney branch of the I.W.W. and was editor of 'Direct Action'. Under his editorial guidance 'Direct Action' became a flagship for the more radical elements of the Australian anti-war movement. Believing that WWI was being fought by workers at either end and of a bayonet, Tom Barker wrote in July 1915 what could arguably be called Australia's most influential anti-war poster –

TO ARMS – Capitalists, Parsons, Politicians, Landlords, Newspaper Editors and other Stay-At-Home Patriots - YOUR COUNTRY NEEDS YOU IN THE TRENCHES! WORKERS! FOLLOW YOUR MASTERS!

The poster caused consternation among the God, King and Country brigade as soon they were put up by the I.W.W. they were torn down by police who surely had better things to do. Concerned about the casualties from the failed Gallipoli campaign and the beginning of public disillusionment with what was increasingly being seen as a trade war between Imperialist powers, the NSW Parliament found Tom Barker's poster – "a more serious matter than Germans in our midst". Discontent over pegged wages, rising prices, unemployment and war profiteering was having a direct affect on Australians initial unequivocal support for WWI.

Tom Barker the editor of 'Direct Action' was arrested on the 3rd of September 1915 and charged under the NSW War Precautions Regulations Act with publishing a poster prejudicial to recruiting. He was held in jail for a week, bailed and eventually fined 50 pounds or 6 months imprisonment for producing the poster. He was also ordered to enter into a bond of 200 pounds (a significant sum in 1915) – "to observe the regulations of the War Precautions Act during the currency of the war which Great Britain is at present engaged - in default another 6 months".

Barker concerned he wouldn't be able to agitate against the war from inside prison – appealed. His Counsel restated the case he made to the Magistrate that Barker had been tried under State regulations in an area covered by

Commonwealth Law. The Judge, unlike the Magistrate, agreed with the Counsel's submission and squashed the conviction. Embolden by increasing dissatisfaction among Australians with the consequences of WWI, a rapidly increasing membership base and their legal victory, the I.W.W. paper 'Direct Action' became a weekly.

'Direct Action' was fortunate in obtaining the services of not just Tom Barker, but a talented young artist Syd Nicholls. As luck would have it, Syd made his debut for 'Direct Action' as a cartoonist in the first week of the war. As a consequence of the Commonwealth government issuing a prospectus for a 10,000,000 pound war loan with the government asking investors "to show a patriotic spirit…. Especially as no sacrifice is entailed… the rate of interest being far higher than normal times", Nicholls penned a cartoon with a soldier crucified on a cannon, his blood dripping into a war profit skull held up by an investor who was shouting – "Long Live the War! Hip, Hip 'Ooray! Fill 'Em Up Again".

This time Barker was not able to evade the War Precautions Act through the use of a legal technicality. He was arrested, found guilty of breaching the War Precautions Act and fined 100 pounds. He refused to pay the fine and was sentenced to 12 months hard labour.

'AUSTRALIA WAKES UP'

In 1915, the Labor Prime Minister Billy Hughes had begun agitating for conscription. The war wasn't going according to plan for the British High Command. The Dardanelles invasion had been a military disaster, the Western Front campaign was bogged down in the Flanders mud. The Universal Service League was pressing for conscription as more men were needed to die for the God, King and Country brigade, as casualties both at the Western Front and the Dardanelles were appallingly high. In response to the pressure for more soldiers, the Billy Hughes led Labor government conducted a war census in 1915 that found 600,000 fit men of military age in a population of a little over 5 million had not volunteered. Keen to bolster the ranks of the 300,000 young Australians who had volunteered with those who had not volunteered, the government sent each man who had not volunteered a letter which asked: -

Are You Prepared To Enlist Now?

Are You Prepared To Enlist Later On?

If Not, Why Not?

The labour movement was in uproar at the idea of conscription. War profiteering had forced the Melbourne wharfies, the Broken Hill miners and the

Illawarra coal miners to go on strike to keep their wages abreast with inflation. The I.W.W. and the Australian Socialist movement found themselves at the forefront of a movement against conscription that included the Catholic Church led by Archbishop Mannix of Melbourne, the labour movement and a growing women's movement.

In January 1916, Billy Hughes, on his way to an Imperial War Cabinet meeting in London sensing that support for the war was waning among Australian workers, turned his attention to the I.W.W. trying to criminalise their activities in the eyes of their fellow workers. He denounced the Wobblies who "posing as lovers of liberty, do what they can, to prevent men from joining the expeditionary forces". He stated: - "It's no use treating these people like a tame cat….. They must be attacked with the ferocity of a Bengal tiger".

Hughes' trip to England was a disaster; the trade union movement's opposition to conscription hardened while he was overseas. Talk of a general strike was in the air; the National Trade Union Congress which was held while he was away, only narrowly defeated the call for a national strike to end the threat of conscription. The I.W.W. continued to curry favour among trade unionists, who began to see Australia's involvement in what was essentially a trade war as a costly mistake they wanted nothing to do with.

When the Prime Minister returned to Australia at the end of July 1916, the battle on the Somme was at its height, victory was in the balance. In response to the threat that they could lose the war, the British government introduced conscription to bolster the supply of men they could send to the European killing fields. Hughes was determined to do the same. Concerned about the possibility of a general strike if conscription was introduced and the opposition of most of the labour movement, Cabinet refused to roll over and did not support Hughes' call to introduce conscription. Faced with determined Cabinet opposition, Hughes won a narrow Cabinet vote that called for a referendum to be called on the question of conscription.

In August 1916, the Conscription Referendum Act was passed by Parliament. The scene was now set for one of the most divisive moments in Australian history.

' The 1916 Referendum'

The two month period between the time the Referendum Bill was passed in parliament in August 1916 and the 28th of October 1916 the date the Referendum was held was filled with events that were designed to frighten people to vote YES. The Prime Minister Billy Hughes, the media and the God, King and Country brigade did their best to identify anti conscriptionists with the I.W.W.

On the 3rd of October 1916, 12 members of the I.W.W. appeared before the Central Court in Sydney and were charged with treason, conspiracy and arson. A few days previously, three members of the Tottenham branch of the I.W.W. – Roland and Herb Kennedy and Frank Franz – were arrested and committed for trial for the murder of Constable George Duncan.

The PM and his supporters had a field day trying to link alleged I.W.W. criminality with the anti conscription struggle. The I.W.W. 12 were committed to stand trial in Sydney on the 20th of November 1916. The trial of Frank Franz and Roland Kennedy was conducted on the 18th of October 1916 – 10 days before the Referendum. They were both found guilty of murder and sentenced to death. Two days later Michael Herbert Kennedy was acquitted of the murder of Constable Duncan. The Prosecutor's case revolved around the men's membership of the I.W.W. When Michael Herbert Kennedy was asked whether it was right to shoot Czars, Governors and policemen, he replied "no", "as it was no use", "if one shot those in office, others would be appointed in their place".

The Sydney Mirror true to form did all it could to prejudice the trial of the I.W.W. 12 and muddy the waters before the anti conscription Referendum: - "The public now know who are behind the anti reinforcement campaign. They know that the I.W.W. is dominated on the one hand by German money and German influence and, on the other hand by a gang of America and other foreign criminals who will stop at nothing to achieve their wicked ends – murder, arson, forgery, smuggling – all the crimes in the calendar".

The anti conscription movement fought back, rallies were held around the country. In Melbourne, 3 days after the Women's Political Association was founded, Vida Goldstein formed the Women's Peace Army – its anti war auxillary. The Women's Peace Army worked under the slogan – "We War Against War". The anti conscription movement brought women into the Australian political arena. In conjunction with Melbourne Trades Hall, the Women's Peace Army brought Melbourne to a standstill on the 4th of October 1916 when over 100,000 people marched to the Yarra bank to hear a bevy of women speak against conscription. The Trade Union movement women's groups like the Victorian based Women's Peace Army, the Roman Catholic church under Melbourne's Arch Bishop Mannix and returned service men who had experience the horrors and futility of WWI, conducted spirited campaigns against the anti conscription Referendum despite wide spread hysteria and the passage of a series of laws like the current 'anti terrorist' legislation which criminalised legitimate political activity.

On the eve of the Referendum newspaper headlines warned Australians the Kaiser and the I.W.W. want you to vote “NO”, the ANZACs want you to vote “YES”.

Despite the hysterical campaign conducted against the anti conscription forces, the people of Australia voted no to conscription at the Referendum held on the 28th of October 1916 and a second conscription Referendum which was held in December 1917.

‘THE AFTERMATH’

The defeat of the conscription referendum in 1916 caused a seismic shift in Australian politics. The Prime Minister Billy Hughes and the Premier of NSW were expelled from the Labor Party because they continued to advocate conscription. Hughes expecting a no confidence vote in his leadership walked out of a caucus meeting with 23 of the 65 members present. The breakaway group formed the National Labor Party. This new party formed a temporary administration with the conservative Nationalist opposition. Two months later in January 1917, the Liberals were admitted to the government. The I.W.W. 12 went on trial for conspiracy to commit arson and sedition on the 4th of December 1916 – all 12 were found guilty and were sentenced to 5 to 15 years hard labour.

A Workers Defence and Release Committee was set up to campaign to get the men out of prison. W. A. Holman the former Labor Premier and ex-socialist who was expelled from the Labor Party for continuing to advocate conscription, won the NSW election held early in 1917 as a member of the newly formed Nationalist Party. The Nationalists won on the back of the fallout of the I.W.W. conspiracy trials in Sydney. NSW workers, feeling the brunt of the war effort at home, went on a general strike in early August 1917 paralysing the State. The strike was defeated when non union workers were brought in to do the unionists work. Billy Hughes, buoyed by Holman’s election victory in NSW, concerned about a hostile Senate’s ability to block the extension of the term for his government, used the public consternation caused by the NSW general strike and the jailing of the I.W.W. as an excuse to call an early election which his new party – the Nationalists – won handsomely. Many believed the Labor Party had blown its brains out and was a spent political force. In government with a healthy majority, the Hughes led Nationalist government pulled out all stops to punish the I.W.W. The I.W.W. was declared illegal, its publications banned, its assets seized and its members were sentenced to 6 months hard labour for belonging to a banned organisation. Monty Miller the grand old man of labour politics – a Eureka veteran and an I.W.W. member, who had been

convicted of seditions conspiracy in 1916 in W.A. for his anti war activities, was sentenced at the age of 86 to 6 months hard labour. Both men and women were sentenced to the maximum term for membership of the I.W.W. which was now an illegal organisation.

Billy Hughes, buoyed by his success at crushing the I.W.W., announced on the day of the Bolshevik revolution the 17th of November 1917 that a second conscription referendum would be held in December 1917. Hughes faced open resistance from the Ryan led Queensland Labor government. While on a whistle stop tour in Warwick Queensland, an egg was thrown at the PM. Senior Sergent Kenny refused to arrest the man who had thrown the egg, telling the PM he was an officer of the Queensland government and only responsible to the Queensland government. Hughes contacted the Queensland Premier who refused to take any further action. Hughes furious at the rebuff, returned to Federal Parliament and passed legislation that created the Commonwealth Police - the forerunner of the Federal Police. Its time, considering the Federal Police's keystone cop attitude to current security issues, they adopted a Federal Police office climbing out of a broken egg as their official emblem.

Hughes promised Australians that if the second conscription referendum failed, he would resign. The NO majority was 72,476 in the first conscription referendum in 1916; the NO majority had increased to 166,588 at the second referendum in 1917. Although Hughes resigned, he convinced the Governor General to recommission him to form a government. The same Ministry took office again after his farcical resignation.

'I.W.W. RELEASE CAMPAIGN'

The unions swung behind the release campaign the NSW Labor Council, Melbourne Trade Hall Council and the Brisbane Industrial Council called on the Parliamentary Labor Party to "use every means in its power to secure the appointments of a Royal Commission to enquire into the whole conduct of the I.W.W. cases by the Crown Law Department and the Attorney General, and to report all irregularities in the Crown's conduct of the case".

The initial Appeal of the 12 before the Court of Criminal Appeal in February 1917 only resulted in the reduction of the sentences of 2 of the I.W.W. 12 from 15 to 10 years. Hamilton, Teen, Beatty, Fagin and Grant still had to serve 15 years. Reeve, Larkin, Moore, McPherson, Besant and Glynn still had 10 years to serve and the King's sentence of 5 years was also upheld.

The I.W.W. was down but not out, remnants of the organisation formed the Industrial Labor Party. Their monthly journal 'Solidarity' opened a fund to support the families of the I.W.W. 12. Faced with increasing pressure from the trade union movement and the obvious perjury of many of the police witnesses that gave evidence that led to the conviction of the I.W.W. 12, the NSW Attorney General called an enquiry "into certain charges made against members of the NSW Police Force in respect of their conduct in connection with the case of King verses Reeve and other". The Labor opposition stated in the NSW Parliament they were not happy with the terms of reference of Mr. Justice Street's inquiry which commenced on the 19th of August 1918.

The Street commission slowly uncovered the real conspiracy behind the I.W.W. 12 trial. Police witnesses were threatened with charges if they did not commit perjury, evidence was manufactured by the police and information was raised that the police anti - subversive unit had planted evidence and may have even lit some of the Sydney fires that led to the seditious conspiracy charges against the I.W.W. 12.

The NSW government sat on the inquiry's findings refusing to intervene in the I.W.W. 12's case. The NSW Labor government, looking for a way out of this morass, appointed a Supreme Court Tasmanian Judge Mr. Justice Ewing to conduct a Royal Commission into the I.W.W. 12 case in late April 1920. The Ewing Commission commenced taking evidence on the 21st of June 1920. On the 6th of August 1920, 10 of the 12 were released on the recommendations of the Ewing Royal Commission. King and Reeve, the last of the I.W.W. prisoners, were quietly released in August and November 1921.

The framing of the I.WW. 12 for purely, political motives required meticulous planning that went far beyond perjury and police involvement. The evidence that was uncovered during the Street and Ewing Royal Commission suggested that both the NSW government and the Billy Hughes led Federal government were involved in the conspiracy to use the I.W.W. as scapegoats to frighten Australians into voting for conscription in 1916 and 1917. Australians, sick of the increasing Australian body count in W.W.I., saw through the campaign against the I.W.W. and voted not to approve conscription in 1916 and 1917 despite government campaigns that were based on lies, intimidation and fear.

The Legacy of the World War One Anti Conscription Struggle

Three hundred thousand Australians from a population of five million volunteered to fight in World War One. Over sixty thousand died on the European killing fields, eight thousand in just one day in the battle of the Somme. Over a hundred thousand came back physically and psychologically scarred by the horrors they experienced. Their families bore the brunt of this suffering because of government policy that refused to acknowledge the high price individuals who participated in the war to end all wars, paid. World War One was essentially a trade war fought by workers at either end of a bayonet for the glory of God, King and Country. On Anzac Day this inconvenient truth will be ignored, the sacrifices made by Australian service men and women will be packaged and re-packaged to suit the political agenda of current governments. The version of history presented for public consumption on Anzac Day has as much to do with reality as a Walt Disney cartoon. Not one moment will be set aside, not one candle will be lit, not one monument has been built to recognise the achievements of those hundreds of thousands of Australian men and women whose personal sacrifices prevented another sixty thousand Australians being sacrificed on the European killing fields for Mammon not freedom, not independence, not liberty, not the right to vote. Those nations that pick and choose what parts of their history they will celebrate, those nations that refuse to recognise the totality of their story are doomed to repeat the mistakes of their past over and over again.

Anzac Day of all days is one day the true story, not the sanitised one dimensional story that is currently dished out to Australians, is aired. The price paid by those involved in war and their families and friends is too high for only one side of the Australian story to be told on Anzac Day.

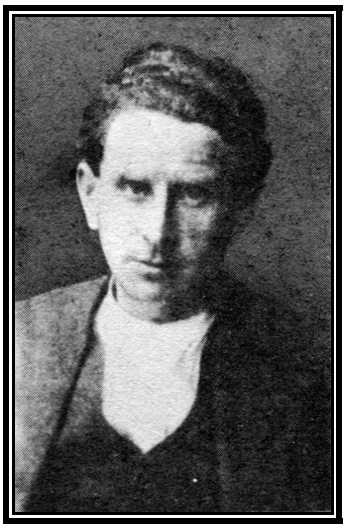
SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY:

‘SYDNEY’S BURNING – Ian Turner’.
Alpha Books Sydney 1967
National Library of Australia
Registry Number Aus 67 - 751

THE TWELVE

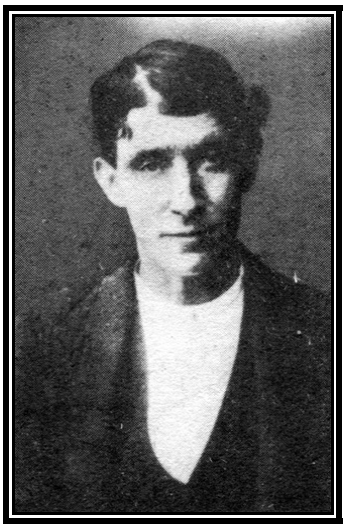
John Hamilton

Peter Larkin



Donald Grant

John Benjamin King

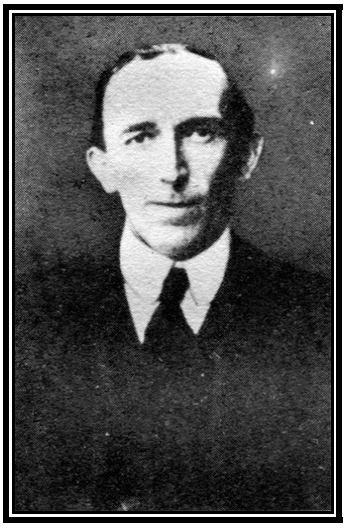


Thomas Moore

Charles Reeve

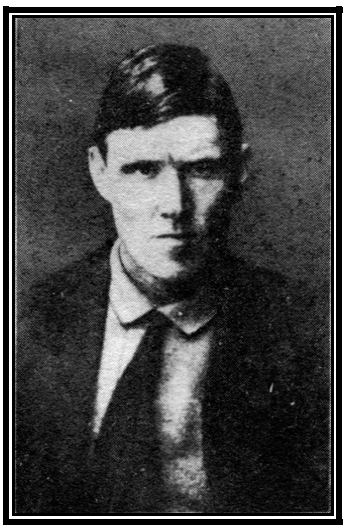
Morris Joseph Fagin

William Teen

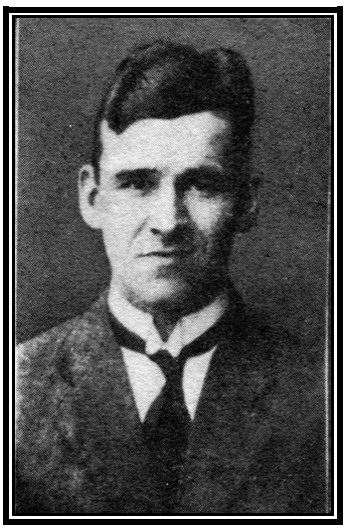


Thomas Glynn

Donald McPherson



William Beatty



Bob Besant